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Welcoming Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh

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Mr. Speaker, I rise to welcome India's distinguished Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh. I was recently pleased to join 70 of my colleagues in encouraging Speaker Hastert to invite Prime Minister Singh to address a joint session of Congress during his visit to the United States. I am honored that Dr. Singh has chosen to accept Congress's invitation.

During a visit to New Delhi in early 2001, I had the opportunity to meet with several government officials, including Dr. Singh, who then served as economic advisor to the Congress Party leader Sonia Gandhi. Already distinguished as the author of India's most successful economic plan, Dr. Singh's wisdom and common sense were evident. I was pleasantly surprised when, in May 2004, Manmohan Singh was sworn in as India's fourteenth Prime Minister. Dr. Singh's position as leader of the world's largest democracy, his keen intellect, and his successful economic plan for India lend him the admiration of governments around the world.

An accomplished economist, Dr. Singh began service in the Indian government in the 1970s. Ever since, his shrewd intellect and thoughtful consideration of complex matters have distinguished him among his colleagues. His elevation to the position of Prime Minister speaks volumes about his country's respect for intelligence and integrity in public leaders.

India is beginning to realize its enormous potential, and I am continually impressed by its citizens. When I came to Congress in the beginning of 1999, the first Member organization that I joined was the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian-Americans, which seeks to inform Members of Congress about issues of particular importance to the sub-continent. Since then, my interest in India and my respect for its people have only grown.

As the world's largest democracy and second most populous country, India has faced and overcome challenges that few can fully appreciate. Through aggressive investment in its education system and infrastructure, India has experienced impressive growth as an economy and as a nation. After years of growth and advancement, India's position in the global community has never been stronger.

I was pleased to join my colleagues yesterday in supporting House Resolution 364, which commends the continuing improvement in U.S.-India relations. The close relationship that our governments share advances the interests of our Nation and our people.

Mr. Speaker, I welcome Dr. Manmohan Singh to this joint session of Congress. I look forward to hearing Dr. Singh speak, and I look forward to continuing to build the important and special relationship between our two countries.